

Ranger Rick's nature magazine

March 1976

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION



March 1976
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Cover Credits:

Front—Male Wood Duck by Stephen J. Krasemann
Back—Young Gardener by Robert L. Dunne



Distinguished Achievement Award



RANGER
RICK'S
PLEDGE

*I give my pledge as a member of
Ranger Rick's Nature Club
To use my eyes to see the beauty
of all outdoors.
To train my mind to learn the
importance of nature.
To use my hands to help protect our
soil, water, woods and wildlife.
And, by my good example, to show
others how to respect, properly use
and enjoy our natural resources.*

Your Name

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A large, pale yellow full moon is positioned in the upper left quadrant of the image. In the foreground, a green luna moth is perched on a dark, thin branch. The moth's wings are spread, showing a vibrant green color with darker green veins and two small, dark, circular spots on each forewing. Its body is dark, and it has long, thin, white, hair-like structures on its head. The background is a deep black, suggesting a night sky. The overall composition is dramatic and highlights the nocturnal nature of the moth.

Moon Secrets

Nighttime. You're asleep.
But look who's awake . . .



◀ The moon and the luna moth! The moth breaks its cocoon on a warm summer night. Wet and bedraggled, it soon stretches its marvelous, pale green wings to take up a flying night life — after all, luna means moon!

The red-eyed tree frog of Central and South America is another wide-awake. At night the male calls for a mate, and the female searches for a place to deposit her eggs. In the moonlight they glisten, stuck to a swaying leaf by water's edge. When the eggs hatch, the tiny tadpoles drop right into the water and swim away!



You may have *heard* geese at night on their long fall or spring migration. Or, like this photographer, you may have been lucky enough to see their black silhouettes streak across the moon. Migrating birds seem to have a complete navigation system—chart, clock and compass—lodged in their tiny brains. Scientists still do not know exactly how birds can find their way in the dark. They probably navigate by the stars, as human sailors did years ago. Next time you're wide awake after dark watch for nature's night life.

—Candida Palmer

Photos by Jane Burton/Black-Caplan Inc. (3), Nicholas Smythe (4), William O. Griffin (5)



Take a trip through

WILDLIFE CAMP

START
HERE

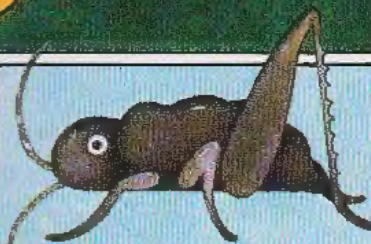
You're up bright
and early enough
to join a
bird walk.

Go ahead
1 space.



On a nature
hike you're
first to see
a ringneck
snake.

Go ahead
3 spaces.



You called a cricket
a grasshopper.

Go back 2 spaces.



NATURE TRAIL

GO ON

You collected
the right plants
to make dyes
for tie-dye.

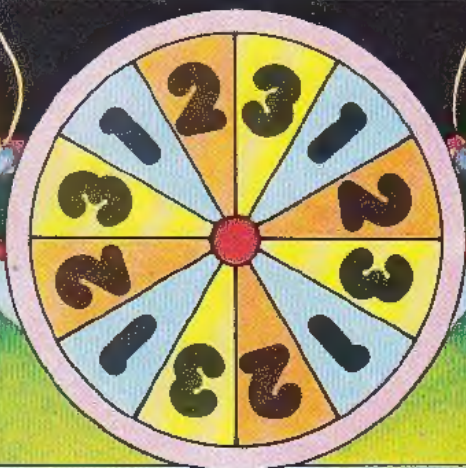
Go ahead
2 spaces.



You didn't listen
when the counselor
told you how to
use your compass.

Move ahead 1 space
and go around the
Nature Trail again.





Play the game with 1 to 3 friends. For markers use a different-colored button for each player. To keep them in place when you turn the page, attach a small loop of tape to the back and stick the button on the game. Use a spinner from an old game or make one with a tack and paper clip. Numbers on the spinner card should read from 1 to 3. If the spinner lands on a line, spin again. In order to win you must spin the **exact** number of moves needed to get to the last square.

You lent your bunkmate flash bulbs to take insect pictures at night.

Take another turn.

Spooky stories around the campfire scared you.

Go back 1 space.

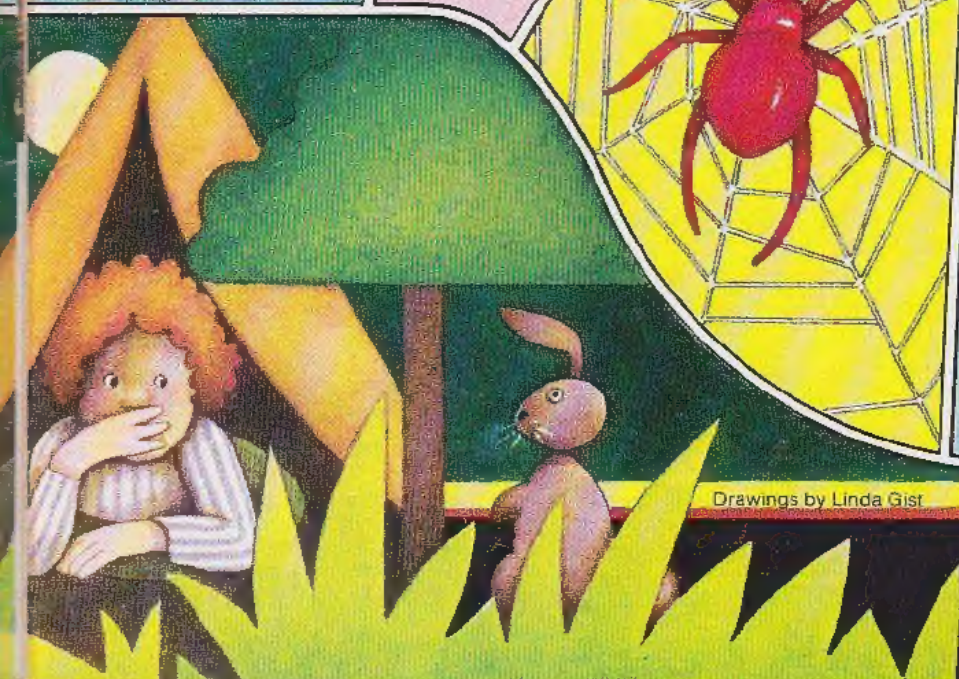


You got up several times in the night to bottle-feed 3 orphaned raccoons.

Go ahead 1 space.

You forgot your net for exploring pond life.

Go back 1 space.



Drawings by Linda Gist

You spilled
chocolate milk
on your
Wildlife T-shirt.

Lose 1 turn.



You remembered
to fill your bleach
bottle birdfeeder.

Go ahead 1 space.



You dropped
your water-
testing kit in
the stream.
Go back 3 spaces.



You were first
to spot the Big
Dipper and the
Milky Way.

Go ahead
1 space.



You made and
baked primitive
bread on a cook-
out, but it burned.

Go back 3 spaces.

The game is over.
Now you're ready
for the real thing.

Move to the next
two squares.

Ranger Rick's nature magazine



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Drawing by Arabella Wyheatter

Hi! Here I am with my friend Sissie, the Canada goose. Sissie asked me to come up here to Canada and welcome the new Canadian members of my Nature Club. You see, the Canadian Wildlife Federation is offering membership in Ranger Rick's Nature Club to young people in their country. I think it's a great idea! I hope you enjoy these letters from our friends across the border. And I hope to hear from more of you both in Canada and the United States. R.R.

Dear Ranger Rick,
I received my first issue of the Ranger Rick magazine. I just loved it; I read all of it and it was really good. I have two pet anoles (type of lizard). They are nice as pets and they eat live spiders, mealworms, flies, mosquitoes, etc. I like reptiles.

Caro. Weverink
Port Coquitlam, British Columbia

Dear Ranger Rick,
How are you and all your friends? My friend Linda

We help them in any way we can. We build birdhouses and feeders. We have a sale and the money goes to the London Humane Society. Practically every day we go down to Medway Creek (a forested area near us) and fish all the garbage out of the creek.

Rhonda Creighton
London, Ontario

Dear Ranger Rick,
I live in Nanoose Bay, 87 miles from Victoria, our Province's capital. Nanoose Bay is a small place (in people) on Vancouver Island. The bay has various types of wildlife that I enjoy observing. Great blue herons, sea gulls, starfish, oysters, black oyster catchers and many others. Unfortunately, people have just about stripped the beach of oysters. We also have dry-land wildlife—robins, bears, cougars, varied thrushes,

hummingbirds, snakes and many more. One of your relatives enjoys eating the goldfish out of our pond (no complaint)! I enjoy your magazine very much. It has helped with school assignments and Girl Guide badges. Thank you. Sheneugh Gardiner
Nanoose Bay, British Columbia

Dear Ranger Rick,
I have some friends that picked up a baby house sparrow right in their bare hands. I am crying because I don't like what they are doing. Please tell me what to do. Pam Alderdice
Montreal, Quebec

Let's hope they put it back in the nest and let the mother and father sparrow take care of it. Don't worry—the scent of humans will not scare the parents away. R.R.

by Don Alpers

It was the middle of April of 1975 and great flocks of birds were winging their way northward. Thousands of ducks and geese led the way as they usually do.

But things were different that year. The north winds were very strong and heavy snowstorms came unusually late in the spring. The migrating birds badly needed a place to find shelter from the storms and to rest during their long flights.

Ducks and geese by the thousands found refuge in Nebraska at the Sacramento-Wilcox Game Management Area. And large numbers of sandhill cranes were resting near the Platte River.

It was at this time that tragedy struck. Avian cholera (AY-vee-an KOL-uh-rah)—a disease that kills birds—broke out in the central Nebraska refuge area. Ducks and geese were dying in great numbers. Crows that roosted in the area were spreading the disease to the waterfowl that came down on the small lakes and ponds in the refuge.

Wildlife managers were unable to stop the terrible disease. As they worried over this sickening sight they suddenly thought of an even worse problem. In a few days

one of our rarest and most beautiful birds—the whooping cranes—were due to fly across the state.

What if even one of the 49 remaining whoopers was to land in the infected area? If a whooper contracted the deadly disease he could spread it to all the rest.

The whoopers, whose scientific name is *Grus americana*, had already left their wintering grounds at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas. They were headed north for their nesting area in Canada's Wood Buffalo National Park. Their flight would take them over Oklahoma and Kansas, then over the infected area.

A violent snowstorm raged over Nebraska as the first whooping cranes battled their way across the state. They were forced down by the storm and—you guessed it—they landed right in the middle of one of the diseased areas. A farmer was the first to spot the flock of nine whooping cranes on the lagoon. Wildlife managers at the Sacramento-Wilcox Game Management Area quickly prepared to do battle to save



CLOSE CALL FOR WHOOPEERS

the whoopers. In a blinding snowstorm the people worked for long hours trying to scare the birds away to a safe area. They tried shotgun blasts and firecrackers, but the stubborn whoopers refused to budge.

At last it stopped snowing! With a small airplane the managers were able to herd all but two of the whoopers to a safe area.

All night long the managers shivered in the cold as they watched over the cranes. Suddenly as day began to break the last two whoopers took off and were herded by the airplane to a safe spot.

Slowly the icy winds died down and the nine whooping cranes flew off to the north. The tired but happy wildlife managers breathed a sigh of relief. They had done the best they could to protect the birds from the deadly disease.

Fortunately the other 40 whoopers had sat out the storm in Kansas and did

not come to the diseased area. But some worrisome moments still lay ahead. Would the birds make it to Canada in good health? For days everyone waited for word from the north. Finally the news came—and it was good!

The entire flock of 49 whooping cranes had reached their Canadian breeding grounds. They were being watched carefully by Canadian wildlife managers for any sign of sickness. All the birds seemed to be healthy, and the managers were sure the cranes would not develop the disease.

By that time four of the whoopers had already begun nesting. So the number of whooping cranes will hopefully continue to grow. We all should be grateful to the people who cared enough to spend many hours in the blizzard-swept Nebraska flatlands helping to save the majestic birds.

It was a close call for the whoopers, but their struggle to survive can go on. *The End*



THE



by Kay L. Harvey

Have you ever stood near a marsh where cattails form thick stands like miniature forests? Red-winged blackbirds and marsh wrens nest among them, and wild ducks and geese scurry to them for cover when they sense danger. Muskrats eat the shoots and nip off the leaves to build homes, and elk eat the cattails' tender leaves.

Humans also have found many uses for cattails, which on the West Coast are known as tule-reeds.

The Ojibwa (Oh-JIB-way) Indians, who lived chiefly around Lake Superior, named them *kashig wzow* (CAW-shig WA-zo). They dug up the roots with sticks and ate them raw; or they roasted them over hot coals. Some of the roots were dried and stored for winter use. The tender shoots, boiled with wild cucumber, were considered a treat.

The green flower heads were also cooked and eaten like corn on the cob. To Indian children the sap of the plant was candy.

Indian women used the brown fluff of the seeds to wrap the bottoms of their newborn babies—the first disposable diapers! The women also wove mats and blankets from the leaves. They pulled the down apart and used it as stuffing in light, warm quilts.

In fact, the cattail was so important to Indian families that feuds between tribes broke out over control of cattail marshes.

Early settlers learned many uses of this plant from the Indians; they also thought up one use of their own: They stuffed their boots with the down to keep their feet warm and to protect against frostbite.

Later people used the dry cattail leaves

Cattails





American Indians built a fire in a pit lined with stones. Cattails, sandwiched between layers of wet grass, cooked on the hot stones.

to make woven chair seats and to caulk barrels and boats; as the leaves became wet they swelled and filled the cracks, making them watertight.

The cattail is still one of the best wild foods known. Its roots are high in starch and every part of the plant is safe, nourishing food. The young shoots taste like cucumbers and are used in salads. The yellow pollen can be added to cookie

dough or pancake batter in place of a third of the flour.

Cattails are among nature's strongest structures. This sturdy plant has survived the winds of the marshes for nearly twenty million years—long before we copied its leaf construction in airplane wings!

Pull off a thin, green leaf and slice across. Shave a bit of skin from it and study its beautiful, sturdy cell structure.

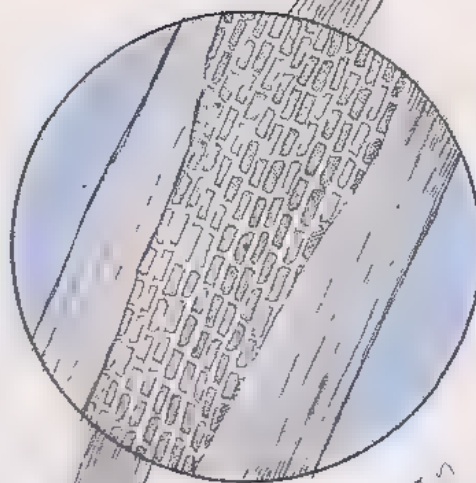
Please turn the page

leaf

male
flower

female
flower

root



The cross section of a leaf, seen under a magnifying glass, looks like the inside of an airplane wing—little boxes stuck end-to-end supporting the long, skinny leaf.

No wonder cattails can twist and bend in the wind but seldom break.

In springtime the swordlike leaves poke through the wet earth, and soon velvety green flower heads grow on thin, stiff stems. On the lower half of the pencil-thin flower heads thousands of female flowers grow, and above them, almost as many male flowers. The female flowers swell into fat sausage-shaped brown seed heads. (Pull a cattail head apart and you will see that each brown seed is attached to a silken thread which is tipped with a tiny parachute of fluff.) The male flowers burst open with golden pollen, which is carried by wind, birds and bees to fertilize other cattail plants.

By autumn the male heads drop their flowers and become bare spikes. The female parts ripen and the seeds loosen. The late winter winds will send millions of seeds soaring over the countryside. Each will be carried by its own parachute to sprout in other marshes and along the shores of lakes and ponds and streams.

When you find a cattail marsh, explore this interesting plant while you listen to a red-winged blackbird call, or hear the cattail leaves rustling in the wind. *The End*

WHO·O·O KNOWS?

by Wise Old Owl



Dear Wise Old Owl:

I really liked the bat article in the October issue. I'd like to know more about the noises bats make.

Ashley Sargent Gladwyne, PA

Bats are just about the noisiest creatures in the world! For many years no one knew just how noisy bats are, because most of their squeaks are too high-pitched for human ears to hear. Now scientists use special equipment to record bat squeaks and to play them back so human beings can hear them.

What does a bat squeak sound like? Well, one eavesdropping scientist says it sounds like the scream of a jet plane up close. Since there are millions and millions of bats around, perhaps it's just as well our ears can't hear all that screaming and shrieking!

Bats also make noises that humans *can* hear. These little squeaks are probably used to express emotion or to communicate with other bats.

Some bats even purr! When big brown bats are resting and contented, their bodies start to vibrate. This soft humming noise is called "body buzz." The buzzing stops when the bat falls asleep.

In the July 1975 issue there was a gray-brown tarantula on p. 3. Are all tarantulas that size and color?

Laura Smith, Navarre, OH

These big hairy spiders come in different colors—black, gray, brown. Some are light brown with orange "knees."

As spiders go, tarantulas are big. Many are the size of *your fist*. Some South American giants are as big as *your father's fist*! These giants live in trees and eat small birds.

Tarantulas are poisonous, but not deadly to humans. People who have been bitten say it feels like a bee sting. Chances are you'll never be bitten by one of these beady-eyed creatures; they're quiet and secretive, and attack only in self-defense. Some people even keep tarantulas as pets!

Do caterpillars have eyes?

Rob Fox, Birmingham, AL

Yes. In fact most caterpillars have 12 eyes—six on each side of the head! They look like six tiny beads or dots just above the bottom of the caterpillar's jaw. You'll probably need a magnifying glass to see them.

The End

Hoes made soft sounds as they scraped the ground. Eager hands carefully lifted small seedlings from pots while others patted soil around newly planted seeds. All workers seemed to be concentrating intently on what they were doing. What was going on? These youngsters were planting their *community garden*!

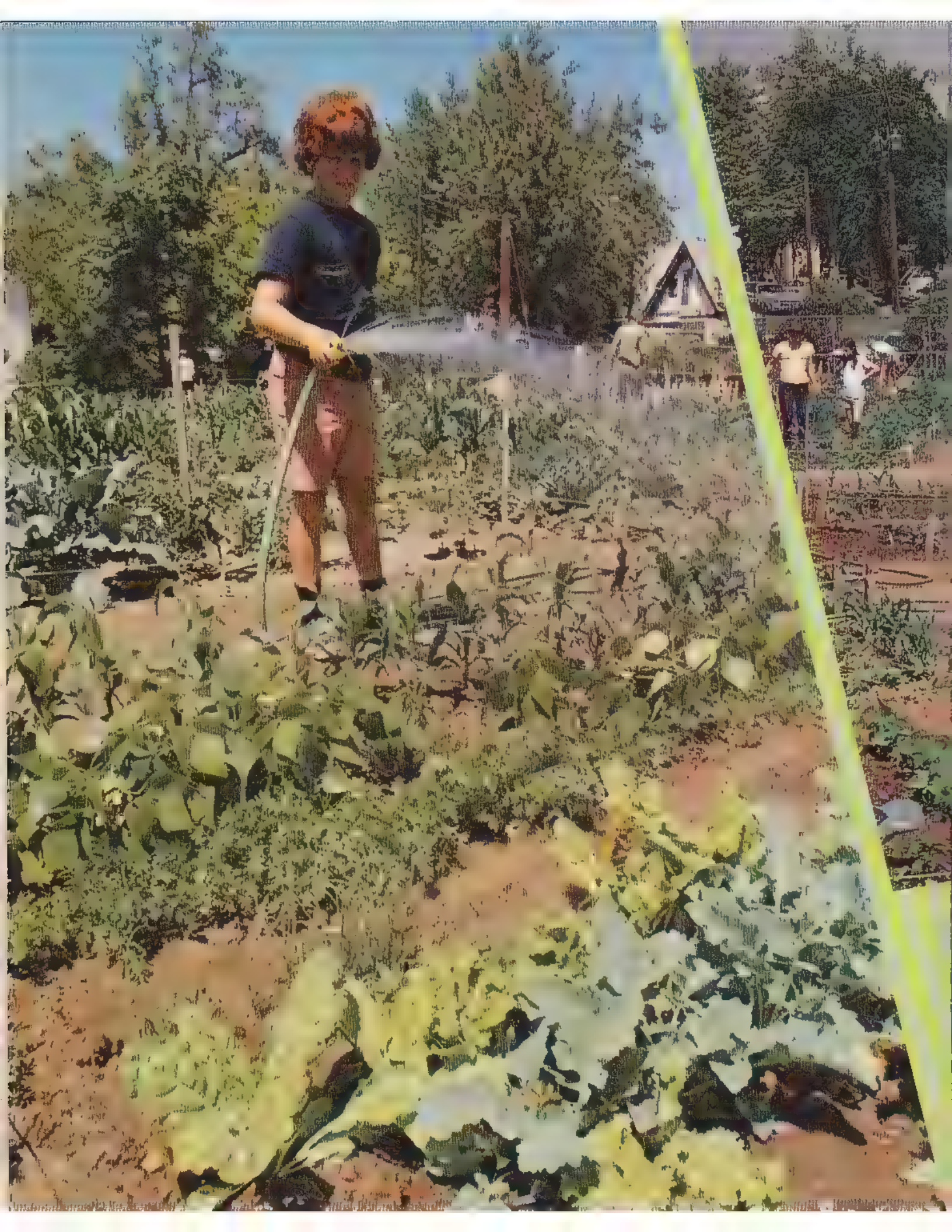
The land they worked on last spring belongs to the Denver, Colorado, Botanical Gardens. But before any seeding was done, plans had been a long time in the making. The youngsters had to draw lots for their plots and decide what to plant where. Should they plant flowers as well as vegetables? (Of course. Some, like marigolds, are great natural pesticides.)

Sounds like fun? You bet! And you and your friends can do the same thing in your community. Maybe somebody has already organized one. O.K. Join up, or better yet, start another one. Look around. Are there any good-size pieces of land near you that nobody is using? Check your town hall, church or garden club to see whether they know of any available land. With the owner's permission, you, too, can turn that plot into a community garden. Once the plot is found, start planning everything you will plant, and when. Find an expert to help you.

Please turn the page







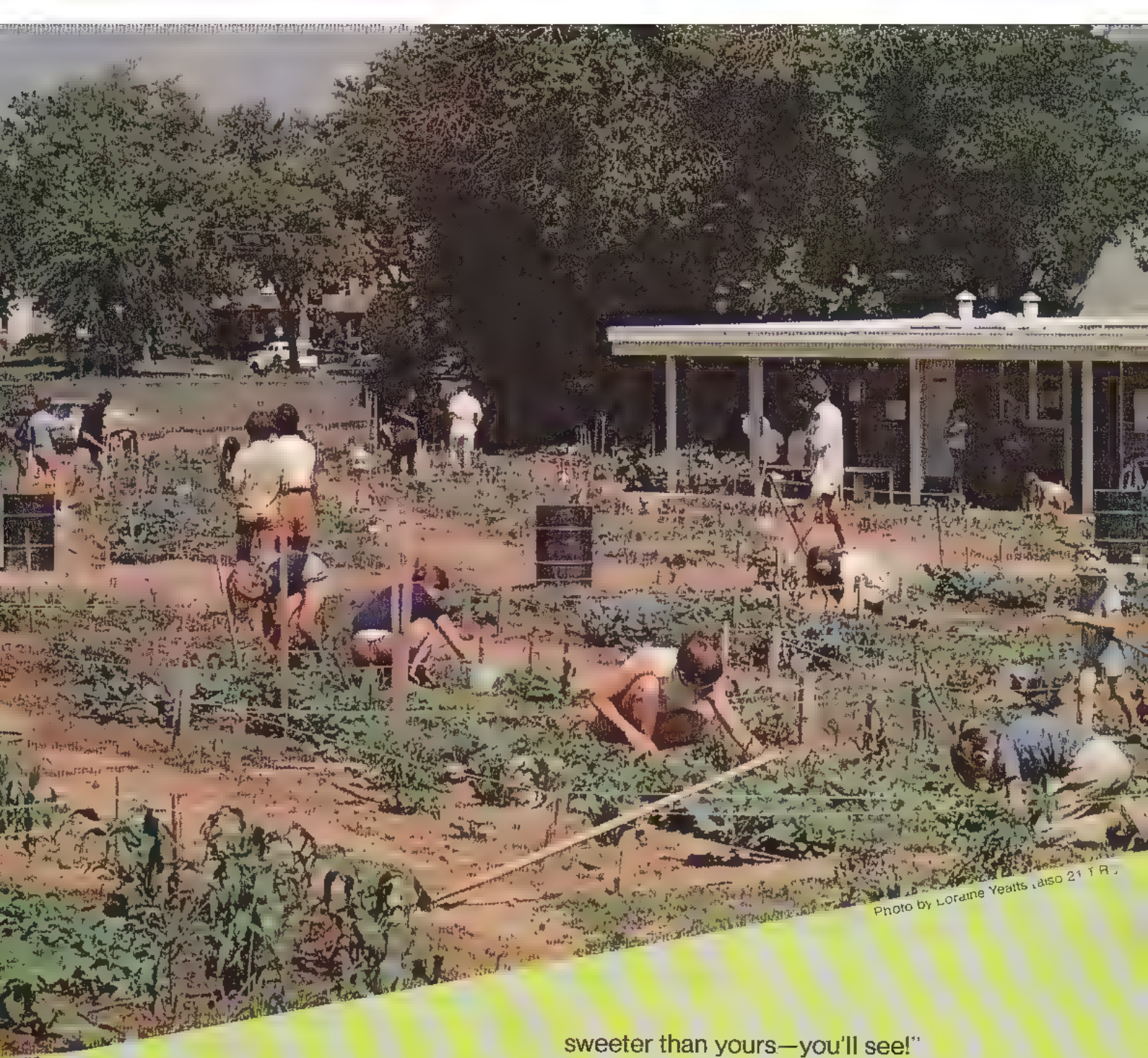


Photo by Loraine Yeatts (also 21 T R)

Once your seeds are in the ground, sit back and watch—work a little, too. Before long that bare ground will begin turning into a lush green island full of delicious fresh food!

That's the way it was in Denver. After a few weeks, small green shoots began to appear.

"Hey, my radishes are coming up!"

"Boy, my peas look great. Bet they'll be

sweeter than yours—you'll see!"

"No way! My green beans are going to taste best!"

"I'll give you some of my buttercrunch lettuce if you'll give me some of your tomatoes when they get ripe later on."

It was hard to resist the temptation to pull things up and see how they were growing, but the young Denver gardeners were patient. They hoed and watered and weeded, and often stood around just plain admiring their work!

Please turn the page



Harvest time—a fat, tasty squash; ripe red tomatoes; crisp beans and parsley. Yummy vegetables and tasty makings for salads. Mouths watered. What feasts they would have.

Then, at summer's end, the youngsters created funny "creatures" to win prizes and everyone shared in an enormous feast of all the goodies they had grown.

DIG IN! What you dig up will be DELICIOUS! *The End*





Ranger Rick and his friends



Adventure #89 Wild and Free
by Robert A. Brownridge

"What beautiful mountains!" said Becky Hare as she hopped along in the bright Nevada sunshine.

"So this is what they mean by the wide open spaces," Ollie Otter chimed in.

"This certainly is an improvement over the cold snowy weather we had on our trip last month," said Bobby Beaver.

Rick laughed and said, "We're really moving around the country this year. But we're here to meet another animal some of our Rangers feel should be chosen Bicentennial Animal of the Year."

"I think the bison is a good candidate because he helped the pioneers move westward," said Becky.

"I still think I should be the winner," said Bobby. "If it weren't for beavers, no one would have come to this country in the first place."

"That's not really true, Bobby," answered Ranger Rick. "The very first explorers here in the West were Spaniards, looking for

gold, and they brought with them"

"What's that noise?" interrupted Becky, nervously twitching her ears.

A rumbling sound could be heard in the distance. The noise grew louder and louder.

"I'm getting out of sight," said Bobby shakily as he jumped down a ledge beside a wide stream. Ranger Rick, Ollie and Becky followed him quickly. Whatever was making the noise was getting closer.

"It s-s-s-sounds like a locomotive, b-but I don't see any smoke," stuttered Ollie.

"Maybe it's a herd of buffalo heading for water. Maybe they'll stampede right over us!" worried Bobby.

Suddenly the noise stopped.

"This is silly," said Bobby, gaining confidence. "I'm going to see what's happening." He stood up very cautiously and slowly pushed his head over the ledge. And there he was—eyeball to eyeball with a huge wild horse! Bobby screamed in terror, jumped backward and landed in the stream with a great splash.

The powerful chestnut-colored horse raised his head and whinnied loudly in



amusement. "That's the best back dive I've seen," he laughed.

When Rick, Ollie and Becky saw the cause of Bobby's fright, they joined in the laughter. Bobby splashed back to shore muttering about monsters who sneak up on poor unsuspecting beavers.

"I'm sorry I frightened you," said the great horse. "My name is Spirit. I'm a stallion — the leader of that band of mares over there. When I saw something moving on the bank, I had to check to make sure the mares would be safe."

"Hi, Spirit," greeted Rick. "I'm Ranger Rick and these are my friends. We're in luck. You're just the one we came to see. Bobby, I want you to meet the next candidate for Bicentennial Animal of the Year."

"Well — uh — hi, Mr. Horse," said Bobby.

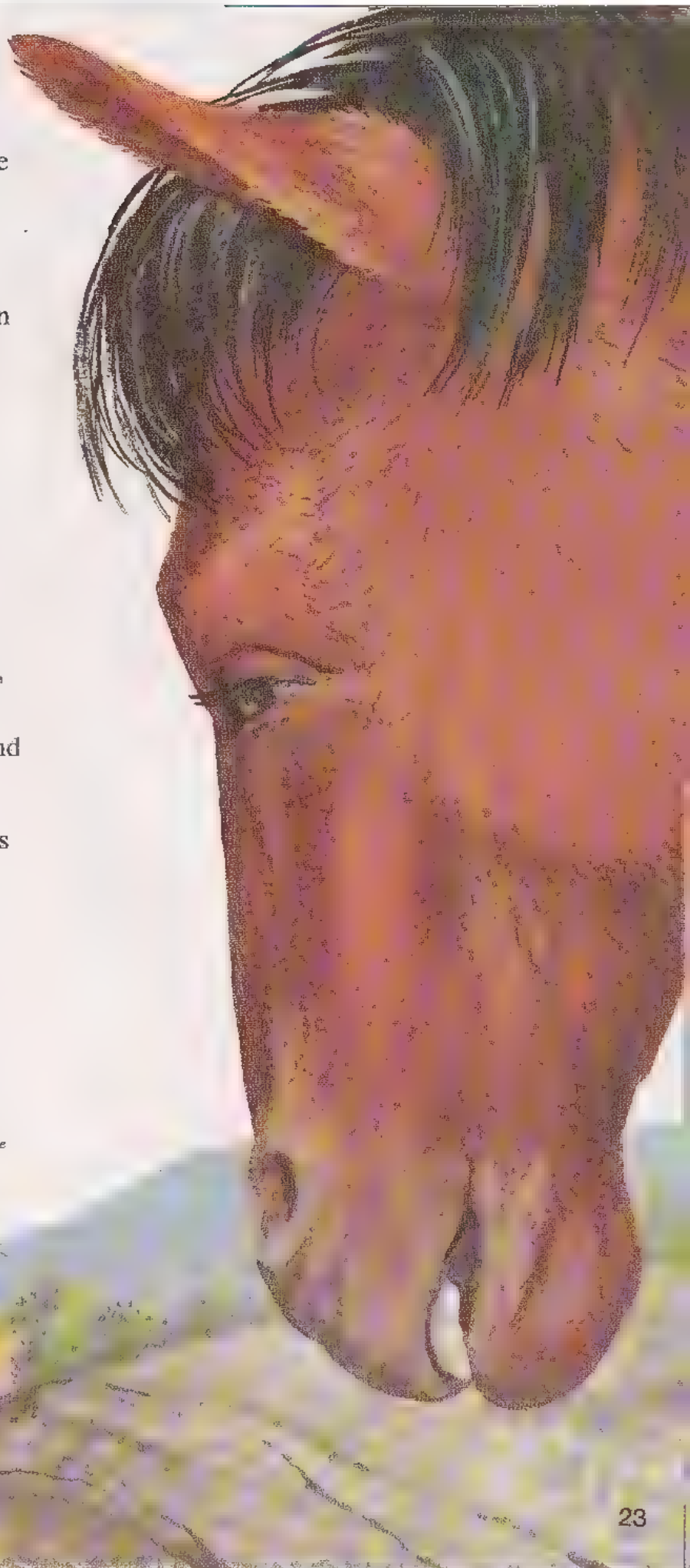
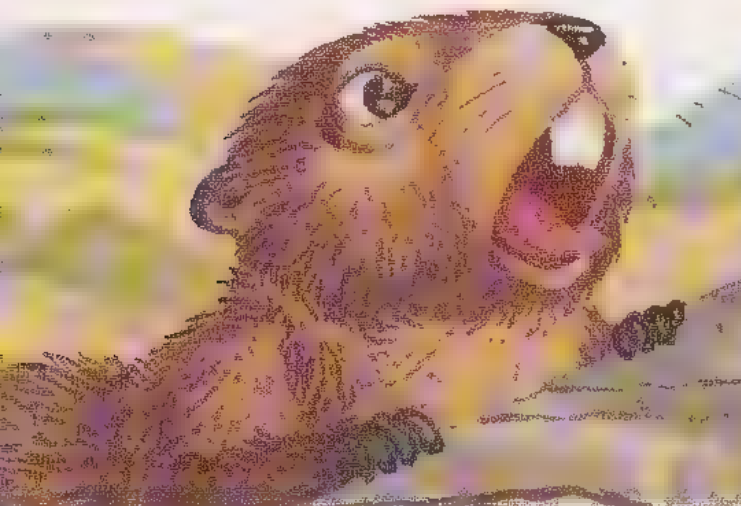
"How come you were looking for me, and what's this business about Bicentennial Animal of the Year?" asked Spirit.

"We're learning all we can about animals which were important in the history of early America. If our Rangers think your ancestors were the *most* important, you'll win an award," answered Rick.

"You can engrave the trophy 'Spirit of America,' and send it right here to my home on the range," laughed Spirit.

"Just a minute," said Ollie. "You haven't been voted most important yet."

Please turn the page





Just then the mares trotted down to the stream, led by a black horse with a long, flowing mane. Rick and his friends moved out of the way as the mares began drinking the cool water.

"Go on, Spirit," said Rick. "I was just starting to tell my friends how Spanish explorers came to this country looking for gold and brought your ancestors with them."

"Yes, that was the start of the modern-day horse's story in America," said Spirit. "And our poor ancestors had a terrible time getting here. I've heard many stories about those days. They are passed down from generation to generation."

"What happened?" interrupted Ollie.

"The horses were tied down on the decks of the Spanish ships or hung in slings. They were fed stale hay for many, many weeks, and not all the horses survived.

"When the Spaniards reached the New World, they rode our ancestors while they explored this country and Mexico."

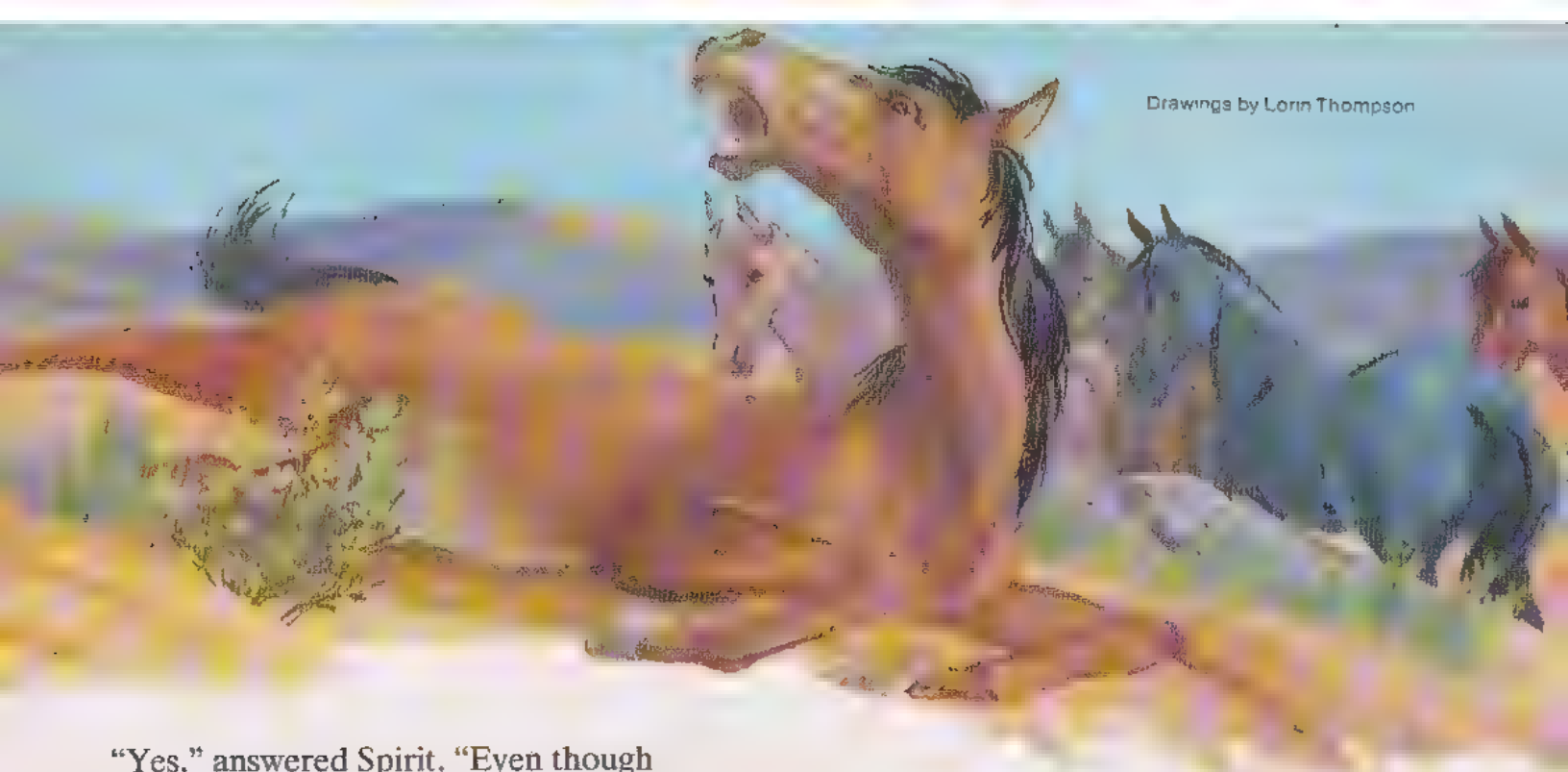
"But how did you become wild and free?" asked Bobby.

"Many of our ancestors strayed from the Spaniards," said Spirit. "Later on the American and Mexican Indians found some of them. The Indians were able to travel faster and farther and were able to hunt better because of us. By the time the settlers arrived from the East, wild horses roamed in large bands throughout the plains. The settlers called us mustangs."

"What does 'mustang' mean?" asked Bobby.

"It's a Spanish word which means stray or ownerless animal," answered Spirit.

"Did the settlers use mustangs too?", asked Bobby.



"Yes," answered Spirit. "Even though the settlers had brought other breeds of horses out with them, many were lost or stolen, or died. That's when they began to capture mustangs. We were used for many things—herding cattle, transporting people and their supplies, and carrying the mail."

"Boy, that must have been exciting," Bobby shouted. "The Pony Express!"

"It was, Bobby, and I think we did a good job," said Spirit. "Those were busy days for *all* horses."

With that the huge stallion raised his head and whinnied to his band of mares. They gathered together, the lead mare at the front. Spirit turned to say good-bye. "You know where to send my trophy if your Rangers choose the mustangs!" He reared up and pawed the air. Then the band galloped off with Spirit bringing up the rear.

They had gone only a short distance when Spirit reared again. His whinny was a cry of pain. Suddenly his knees buckled and he went down.

The rest of the band circled around quickly, and Rick and his friends raced over to see what had happened. Spirit tried to stand but fell again.

"What's wrong, Spirit?" asked Rick.

"Rattlesnake bite," gasped Spirit.

Quickly Rick reached into his pack for his snakebite kit and made two tiny cuts in the horse's leg. He put a suction bulb over them to suck out the poison. Finally Rick finished bandaging the leg.

"I think I got most of it," he said, "but it's really going to hurt for a while."

"Thanks, Rick," said Spirit. "There are lots of dangers to being wild and free, but we wouldn't want it any other way."

After several hours Spirit's leg felt better. He got his group together again and they took off across the plains.

"He certainly seems like a worthy candidate for Bicentennial Animal of the Year," said Becky with admiration as the powerful animals galloped away.

"Wait till you meet our next animal candidate," said Rick. "It's even larger and more powerful than the buffalo *or* the mustang."

"Tell us who it is, Rick," begged Bobby.

"Not a chance," laughed Rick. "But I'll tell you one thing. We're not going to be like the pioneers who opened up the West. We're heading east!"

The End

Happy bee



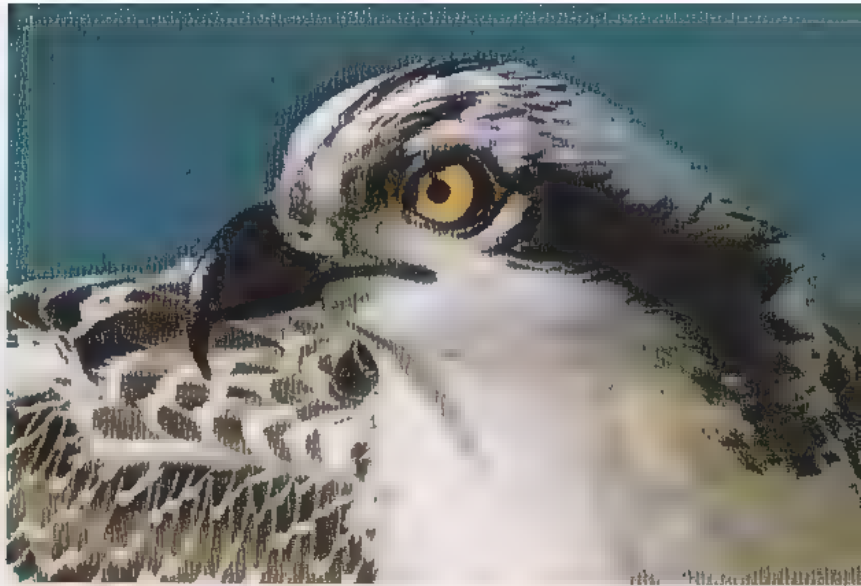


extinct 50 years ago. Now, thanks to laws that protect them, you can watch over 15,000 of them as they slip along the West Coast on their yearly migration.

raising more and more young.

The shy Hawaiian monk seals were hunted for their oil, hide and meat until only a few were left. In 1909 one

Photos by Ron Church, Sina, Brary, Jen & Des Barlett, Bruce Vorman, David B. Marsha, Sed, Brary





Alligators were once in big trouble. Now, thanks to the endangered species laws, there are over 700,000 lurking in the swamps of Florida, Louisiana and other southern states.

Cougars were all gone from the northeastern United States, and **wolves** were gone from the Rocky Mountains. At least that's what everyone thought. But people have been spotting cougars from eastern Canada to the Carolinas, and wolves are back in Yellowstone National Park. Wow! Would I love to see a wild cougar or wolf!

Ever since a law was passed to protect them, wild **burros** have been multiplying fast – too fast! There are so many now that they are eating the food and drinking the water that the desert bighorn sheep need. So, the United States Government is trying to keep the burro population under control. One way is to round up some of them and let people keep them on their own property. Anybody want a burro for a pet?

Please turn the page



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new laws protect them, and new raising programs are being developed.



save our wetlands



National Wildlife Week
March 14-20 1976

JOIN AND SUPPORT THE NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION AND ITS AFFILIATES

Nature Club News

Save our wetlands? You might wonder, why worry about all that squishy mud, and those slimy green algae, needle-sharp grasses and hungry mosquitoes. What's so great about a salt marsh, or a swamp, or the "potholes" of the west?

Nothing! many people would say. We have been draining them and paving over them to make farmland, parking lots and airports, or to build houses and offices. It has taken us only a few years to destroy what took nature *thousands* of years to build.

But now we've learned that the wetlands are worth saving. The green plants that grow there purify our air. The tiny creatures in the mud clean our water better than any sewage treatment plant. The soft soil holds water like a sponge and helps prevent dangerous floods.



Our wetlands shelter many different kinds of wildlife. They are nurseries for young shrimp, clams, oysters, frogs, fish and other animals we need for food. Did you know that an acre of unpolluted salt marsh can produce *four* times as much food as an acre of rich farmland?

Without wetlands many water birds would have no place to build their nests or to find food, water or shelter during their migrations in the spring and fall.



Larger animals such as moose, foxes, deer and wolves, as well as beavers, muskrats and others, need the wetlands too.

Is there a wetland near you? Take a hike (be sure to wear boots!), or a canoe ride through it. Look carefully at the teeming life there. Ask yourself: *Is it worth saving? You bet it is!*



Wetlands are never wastelands. They are magical, life-giving places! It's up to us to protect them and care for them wisely.

Rangers: If you hurry, you can still get your National Wildlife Week Kit. Send a postcard to Dept. C-76, National Wildlife Federation, 1412 16th Street NW, Washington, DC 20036.

Teachers: Send your card to Dept. T-76 at the same address. But hurry! *R.R*



Andrew's Discovery

by Marguerite Mudge

People have been studying and exploring our planet for many years. And they have discovered many hidden secrets. Scientists have found a fish which they thought had been extinct for at least 70 million years. Explorers have found tribes of primitive people living in jungles in different parts of the world.

But not only scientists and explorers discover secrets. Children do too. In 1965 Andrew Williams, when he was in his teens, discovered a tiny but exciting secret. It happened in a small part of a forest in East Africa, on the shore of the Indian Ocean where his family lived.

Andrew knew a great deal about the birds there. Before he was old enough to go to school, he had helped his father with the bird collections in the museum in Nairobi where his father worked. When Andrew grew older, he helped on scientific expeditions during school vacations.

On an expedition to the small patch of forest, one of his jobs was to take care of the mist nets—fine nets used to catch birds so scientists may study them. (See *Ranger Rick*, Nov. 1974, page 4.) The nets, which are very thin, are strung between trees. The birds can't see them and readily fly into them. Andrew's job was to check the nets before any bird could harm itself.

Late one rainy evening Andrew went to check his nets. In one he found a small



gray-brown owl thrashing about. Gently and skillfully he removed the frightened bird. Cuddling it in one hand, Andrew smoothed the ruffled feathers and tried to identify it. The more he studied the trembling little bird, the more puzzled he became. The bird in his hand was unlike any other owl he had ever seen or even heard about. He knew for sure he could identify all the birds commonly seen in East Africa.

Holding the owl gently, Andrew went to the laboratory tent where the scientists were working. He showed them his captive. The scientists tried to identify the little bird, but they too were puzzled. The gray-brown owl now huddling in Andrew's hands was different from any other owl they knew about.

Andrew's owl was sent to Yale University in the United States. There the scientists spent many hours studying the bird and



comparing it with other owls. Finally they decided that Andrew's bird was an unknown species of owl. They gave it the scientific name *Otus ireneae*. But they nicknamed it "Mrs. Morden's Owlet" in honor of the woman who paid for the forest expedition.

There is only one species of owl close in pattern to Mrs. Morden's Owlet. It lives hundreds of miles to the west in the thick rain forests of the Congo River basin.

Scientists knew of other look-alike animals living far away from each other in Africa. They had a theory to explain how this came to be. They believed that millions of years ago a tremendous forest stretched all across Africa from the Atlantic Ocean to the Indian Ocean. The passing of millions of years brought a drier climate to parts of the forest. The forest area began to shrink, till only separated parts remained.

Finally just two sections of the earlier ocean-to-ocean forest were left—the large rain forest on the Atlantic Coast and the small patch on the coast of the Indian Ocean where Andrew found his owlet (see map).

Bird and animal species living in that smaller forest had become separated from the rest of their kind. There they continued to exist for thousands and thousands of years, isolated in a small part of the once tremendous forest.

The little owls in the forests of East Africa and those in the forest of the Congo River basin slowly changed, each in its own way. They became two different species.

Scientists had known about the owls of the larger forest for many years; but until Andrew caught the little gray-brown owl in his mist net, Mrs. Morden's Owlets had been one of nature's well-kept secrets. *The End*

WILD HORSES

Running like a hurricane,
Up the canyon walls,
Sheltering from fearful rain
They huddle up in balls.

Running 'cross the prairie wide,
They look as though they glow,
With glistening backs and shiny hides,
Their manes so freely flow.

Horses, horses, always horses,
Machines can't take their place —
Horses, horses, always horses,
They set a fiery pace.

— Sue Richard, Age 13



What kind of home do you live in? An apartment? A house? A trailer? If you are an Indian in the Southwest you may live in a hogan.

Some people in the world live in huts, some in tents. Eskimos often lived in igloos.

Home can be many things. It all depends on who and where you are.

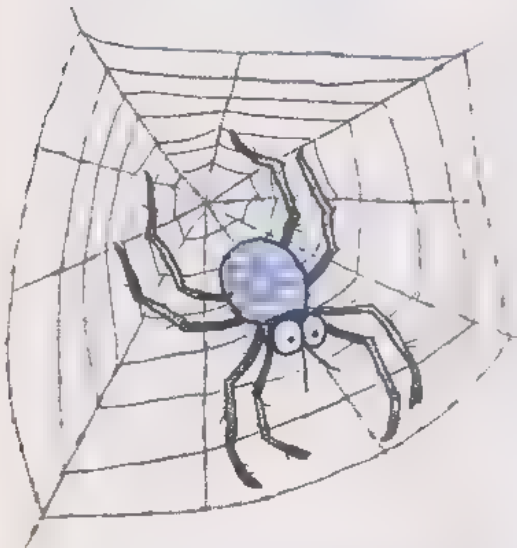


Drawings by Erith van Siver



ust as people live in different kinds of homes, so do other animals.

A termite lives in wood. The termite's home is also its supper. It often tunnels and chews through its home until there is little left. Then it must move to a new home. To keep from drying out in the air as it moves to the new home, the termite chews wood mixed with saliva and makes a cement-like connecting tube to crawl through



Home to most spiders is a cobweb. Some spiders spin very beautiful webs. They do this with two or more pairs of "spinnerettes" on the underside of their bodies. These spiders never have to leave home to hunt for food. They eat the insects that get tangled in their webs

Spider webs are used by hummingbirds to line their nests. Home for the baby hummer is warm and soft.

Not all birds have it this easy. The chicks that pop out



of the common nighthawk's eggs may find their home on a flat rooftop or in a city lot, without any nest at all!

But even a stone nest is better than none. The Adélie (ah-DAY-lee) penguin makes its home in the freezing Antarctic. At nesting time Father penguin collects stones to lift the eggs off the melting ice. If he can't find enough stones, he will steal some from his neighbor penguin. And his neighbor will steal them right back!



The desert pack rat steals anything it can carry but usually leaves something in return. Its nest of sticks may be furnished with spoons, coins, old bones—even socks, if it is lucky enough to find any. The pack rat piles cactus around the outside of its home. The prickly thorns help to keep unfriendly snakes away.

Snakes don't like to be too hot or too cold. They spend a lot of time at home waiting for the right weather for going out. A snake may make its home in a hole in the ground and stay there all winter. In the blazing heat of the summer a snake will stay under shady rocks and brush until the cool of evening



The shy, wild pig makes a grass roof for a home (see page 41). It slashes grass with its tusks, then crawls under it and raises it up to form a sun-shade.

You will always know when friendly squirrels are around. They scamper up and down trees and will often come over to you to ask for nuts.

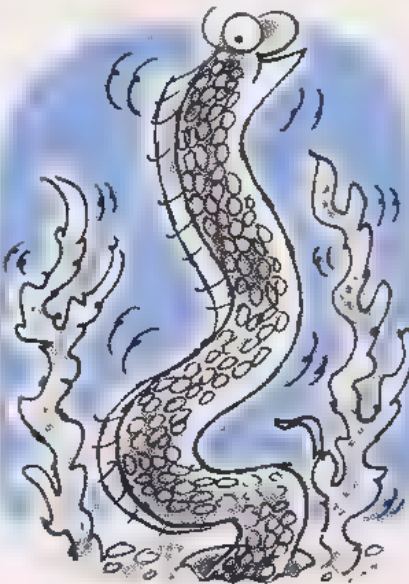


They make their big, shaggy summer homes of leaves high up in branches; in winter many of them move into the hollow of a tree

Small trees and branches are used by beavers to build dams. They gnaw down trees with their chisel teeth, cut off the branches and float them across the stream. They also work hard from night till morning to make a snug home of sticks. The beaver uses its paws to plaster the sticks with mud.

A mud puddle is home to an African lungfish. It will travel from puddle to puddle pushing itself along on its fins. Home to the lungfish can also be a mudball. If the puddles dry up, it will roll up in the mud and wait for rain.

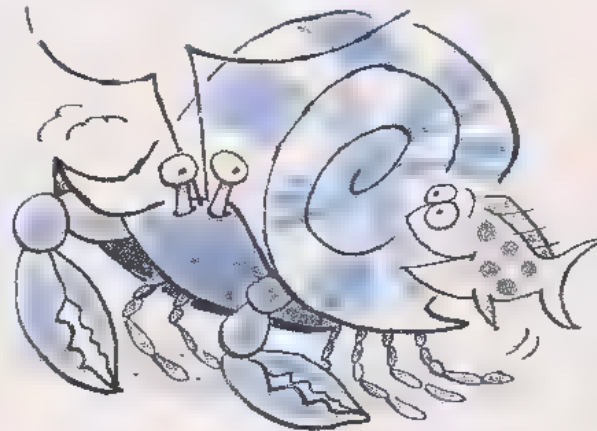
But most fish stay in the water. The home of a garden eel is a tube at the bottom of the ocean. The eel never leaves its home. To search for food it rises straight up and sways looking like a



stalk of seaweed. It keeps its tail in the tube. If frightened, it pulls back into its tube and nothing can be seen but sand and pebbles.

The hermit crab never stays in the same place. It finds an empty shell to live in and is always house-hunting, searching for a new, bigger shell that will fit it as it grows. For the hermit crab, home is somebody else's cast-off.

For other creatures a shell would never be big enough. They need a cave. A cave may be home to bears and wolves, bobcats and bats



Bats swarm out of caves in the early evening to hunt for night insects. They are back home before dawn. There they sleep all day hanging upside down from the roof of the cave.

People also used to live in caves. Some tribes still do. The Tasadays who live in the Philippines make their homes in a few caves

Home can be many things. It all depends on who and where you are. *The End*





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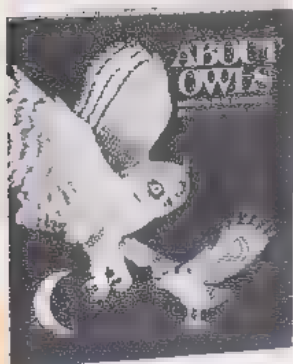


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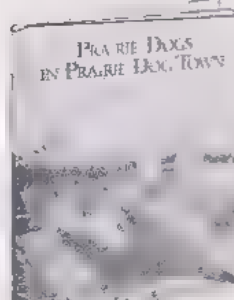
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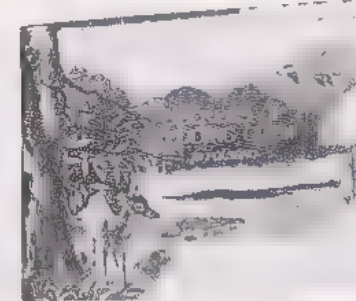
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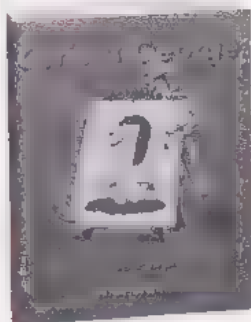
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What makes a pig a pig



by Robin Lesser

To be a pig, you'd first need a round, tough snout. Like a built-in shovel, it would help you "root" or "grub" for food. You'd have poor eyesight, but your senses of smell and hearing would be excellent. In spite of a barrel-shaped body and short legs, you'd be a swift, sure-footed runner and good swimmer.

People sometimes call pigs unfair names like "greedy" or "filthy." But pigs aren't greedy; they're simply not fussy eaters. Although they eat almost anything—leaves,

roots, berries, insects, eggs, small mammals and snakes—pigs in the wild rarely overeat! And they aren't dirty. It's true they are fond of mud baths, but so are hippos and elephants. Mud soothes insect bites and protects and cools their hides. Even domestic pigs wallow.

It's fun to know the differences between the kinds of pigs. Some supply people with meat, bristles and leather. Others have tusks, or a mane, or whiskers, or warts. Some even have babies with stripes!



Bush Pig

Bush pigs are very common in Africa, but are rarely seen. Like most other pigs, they are night creatures. In western Africa their coppery brown coat is so beautiful that they're called red river hogs. Bush pigs are courageous and noted for their good memories. If they come across a trap, and manage to escape it, they will stay away from that area for many weeks.

Fiercer than the bush pigs are the African *giant forest hogs* which may charge without warning. These have black hair and tusks which stick out from the sides of the face.

Peccary

The smallest wild pigs are *peccaries* (PECK-ar-eez). They live mostly in Central and South America. Some can be found as far north as Texas, Arizona and New Mexico. Even the largest peccaries are only about 1 meter (3.3 feet) long and weigh 30 kilograms (66 pounds).

At night peccaries travel in groups searching for food. They are famous as snake



hunters, and, like most other pigs, they aren't bothered by the poisonous venom of rattlesnakes. When peccaries meet a hungry bobcat or coyote, they use their speed or clever group defense to protect themselves. If a member of the group is wounded or chased, the whole herd may counter-attack. And all predators have to watch out for their sharp tusks!

Peccaries make more sounds than other pigs. Besides squeals and grunts, they have a bark-like warning call and an angry rattling noise that they make by chattering their teeth together.

Sleek and clean, peccaries "wash" themselves by pawing sand against their bellies with their forefeet. They also groom other peccaries in their herd.

Please turn the page



Wild Boar

The *wild boars* are the giants among the wild pigs and can weigh as much as a lion! Their black, gray or brown coloring blends with the marshy woodlands of Europe and Asia where they live. Farmers dislike them

because they damage crops with their four long tusks.

As piglets, boars have light horizontal stripes on their sides which fade as they grow older. The adult boars have “sideburns” and a mane.

Wild boars have a most unusual talent.



Photo by Hans Reinhard/Bruce Coleman Inc.

They build their own sunshades! With their sharp tusks they cut grass and spread it out like a blanket. Then they carefully crawl beneath the blanket, raising it until it catches on the taller uncut grass and forms a canopy to shield them.

Long ago people crossed wild boars with

smaller Chinese pigs to produce *domestic pigs*. Today domestic pigs sometimes stray from farmyards and return to the wild. These “feral” pigs are usually found roaming in the southeastern and western United States. They often grow as large and fierce as their wild ancestors.

Please turn the page



Warthog

Warthogs are one of the strangest animals in the world. They have a mane like a horse, curving tusks, bumps all over the face and a tufted tail like a lion—and they kneel when they eat! When a warthog runs, its tail stands straight up in the air. A whole family trotting with tails at attention is

one of the funniest sights on the African plains. Like circus clowns, they're loved and appreciated.

Warthogs make up for their funny looks with bravery and family loyalty. They live in burrows, and when they go to sleep at night the youngsters enter the burrows first. Then the adults *back* in, so they are



Babirusa

A rough-skinned, nearly bald wild pig makes its home on a few of the Pacific islands. Like all pigs it is a good, strong swimmer. It can easily swim the short distances from one island to the next.

These pigs live in family groups. At night the female and young follow along behind the male and eat whatever tasty things he digs up for them.



Photos by Leonard Lee Rue III/Bruce Coleman Inc., San Diego Zoo

facing out, their tusks ready for defense.

I once saw a mother warthog chase a leopard away from her piglets. When I told this to a game warden he replied that he had seen a cranky elephant threatening a warthog at a waterhole. Suddenly the warthog turned and charged the elephant! The elephant was so surprised she ran away!

The tusks of these pigs are amazing. Both upper and lower sets grow upward and curve back toward the forehead. What's more, the upper set grows right through their cheeks! The people who live on the islands think these tusks look like antlers, so they have given the pigs the name *babirusa* (bab-eh-ROO-sah), which means "pig-deer." The people have made up a fanciful story about them. They say that babirusas use their fantastic tusks to suspend themselves from the limbs of trees so they will be safe for the night!

Like other pigs, babirusas can be fierce when cornered. If they are caught as babies, though, they grow up tame. *The End*

Crisp, tangy radishes
taste especially good
when you grow them.
Read about young
gardeners and their
community garden
on page 16.

